

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
30 June 2005 (30.06.2005)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2005/059156 A2**

- (51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C12Q (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/FI2004/000776 (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- (22) International Filing Date: 17 December 2004 (17.12.2004)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data: 20031867 19 December 2003 (19.12.2003) FI
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- Declaration under Rule 4.17:**  
— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only
- Published:**  
— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report
- For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.*

(54) Title: NUCLEIC ACID PROBES, BROAD-RANGE PRIMERS, AND METHODS IN WHICH THEY ARE USED

(57) **Abstract:** The invention relates to nucleic acid probes and to broad-range primers that are useful in the identification of bacterial species and the diagnosis of bacterial infections. Especially, the invention relates to specific nucleic acid probes that originate from hyper-variable regions situated near the conserved sequences of the gene for RNA polymerase beta subunit, *rpoB* (DNA directed RNA polymerase subunit B) of infection-causing bacteria. The invention also relates to broad-range primers originating from the conserved regions of *rpoB* genes. In addition, the invention relates to the use of these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers in the diagnosis of bacterial infections as well as to diagnostic methods in which these nucleic acid probes and broad-range primers are used.

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